

# Rockridge Fellowship Secretary Manual 2025

## Online Meetings

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During the pandemic Rockridge Fellowship went online. Many of these new online groups decided to remain virtual after the Fellowship opened up again for in-person meetings. At this time there are 58 in-person meetings and 49 virtual meetings a week. We are still a Fellowship, though, and many members attend both types of meetings.

Many aspects of training to run an online AA meeting are handled at the group level. This manual covers more general aspects of being an online Rockridge Secretary.

### Secretary Registration & Communication

1. Registration: Complete the online form found on the Rockridge Fellowship website:  
[rockridgefellowship.org](http://rockridgefellowship.org)
2. WhatsApp: Join the Secretaries Group on WhatsApp. This is for one-way communications from the Steering Committee members so we can send notices of alcathons, BBQs, etc.
3. Emails: If you haven't received any email from [secretaries@rockridgefellowship.org](mailto:secretaries@rockridgefellowship.org) email address within a month, please do the following:
  1. Check your spam folder and unmark as spam so you receive future communications
  2. Contact the Secretary Coordinator to confirm your registration went through [secretaries@rockridgefellowship.org](mailto:secretaries@rockridgefellowship.org)
  3. If you do not receive a timely reply from the Secretary Coordinator contact the Fellowship Coordinator.

## Online Group Service Positions

A note on titles: On Zoom, the person who opens the meeting is called the Host. The Host is usually, but not always, the Secretary. The Host makes one or two people Co-hosts. Some groups call these folks Techs.

All groups have:

- Secretary
- Co-hosts/Techs

Other positions some groups have:

- Co-secretary
- Attendance Verification person
- Phone List person
- Secretary Coordinator (for meetings than span several days)
- Chip person
- Literature for newcomers person
- Newcomer Liaison

## Setting Up a Meeting

Secretaries open meetings 15 minutes before meeting start time so they can let people in and make newcomers feel welcome. This also allows for the inevitable log-in snafus.

If you are Zoom Host of the meeting, you will make others Co-hosts—it's good to do this right away in case something happens to your internet connection. Most meetings ask the co-hosts to admit members, post announcements in the chat, and shut down disruptions.

Experience has shown that it is best if the Secretary is working from a laptop or desktop computer so that they can see members in gallery view, the participants list, and the chat at the same time.

## Who Can Cover for Me If I Can't Be There?

One of the most important things Secretaries do is make sure that meetings are set up and open when they are scheduled. Keep in mind there may be someone who desperately needs a meeting or a newcomer trying to log in, and we want it to be open for them.

1. Your Co-Secretary: The first person you should contact about your absence is your co-secretary, if you have one.
2. One of your co-hosts.
3. Another meeting secretary, if your group meets several times a week.

## What If Co-hosts/Co-secretaries/Other Service Folks Don't Show Up?

If someone who has taken a commitment stops showing up for a couple of weeks go ahead and elect a new one right away. The needs of the group are primary.

## Running a Meeting

As Secretary you set the tone for the meeting. It's important to be welcoming to all members. Run your meeting according to the traditions and service concepts of AA: "Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern." Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Each meeting is free to choose its own script as long as it does not affect other groups or AA as a whole. At minimum these formats should contain the following elements:

- Welcoming statement
- A reading of How It Works and/or the Preamble
- Chance for newcomers to introduce themselves
- Sponsorship statement ("Who is available to sponsor? A sponsor is a person who has worked the 12 steps and is willing to work with you.")
- Announcements of AA business
- 7th Tradition collection

Many groups include other elements in their formats, such as asking for AA anniversaries, reading the Twelve Traditions or the Promises, or offering literature to newcomers. If you want to change your meeting's format, call for a group business meeting and ask for a vote. AA is constantly changing!

If you want some guidance in updating a script contact the Online Meeting Coordinator. [online@rockridgefellowship.org](mailto:online@rockridgefellowship.org)

## Muting People

It's easy to see who is making noise or unmuted on the Participant List rather than searching around the gallery view screen. People appear on the Participant's Tab in this order:

1. You (if you are not the Host)
2. Host
3. Co-hosts
4. People with hands raised
5. Person speaking/making noise
6. People who are unmuted
7. All others in alphabetical order

Simply click the microphone icon beside their name to mute them. It's a good idea to mute anyone who is not currently speaking. Saying, "Please mute yourselves!" when folks are unmuted is disruptive and generally ineffective.

## Managing Shares

There are several ways to handle calling on people:

- Ask members to raise their hands using the Reactions tab and then call on them in the order shown on screen/in the Participants Tab.
- Ask people to share randomly.
- Tag meetings, where the member who shares calls on the next person to share.

If a speaker is monopolizing the meeting the secretary can wait for a pause and say, "Thank you for your share. I'd like to give someone else a chance to speak."

Some groups have voted to have a time limit, ranging from 1 to 5 minutes. A timer is appointed to set a Zoom alert.

## **7th Tradition Collection**

Your 7th Tradition goes to Rockridge Fellowship. The Fellowship covers online and in-person meeting expenses and contributes to the larger AA service structure. Rockridge financial reports are shown at the business meetings and can be found on the website ([rockridgefellowship.org](http://rockridgefellowship.org))—decisions about how the Fellowship uses the 7th Tradition funds to further our primary purpose are made by the members of the Fellowship at the business meeting.

## **Safety at Rockridge**

Safety can be a confusing topic in AA. But our principle of anonymity does not mean we allow people to behave in a way that interferes with our primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholics who still suffer. Sometimes we have to place the needs of the group ahead of the needs of an individual.

Sometimes a speaker will stray into territory that is not appropriate for AA meetings, such as politics or sexist or racist comments, which creates an unsafe environment. The secretary should halt such talk immediately, asking that the speaker refrain from continuing in this vein. You may be told, “There are no rules in AA,” but this is not true, and the primary purpose of our meeting must be put first.

A very good summary of safety at AA meetings can be found here: [aa.org/aa-guidelines-safety-and-aa-groups](http://aa.org/aa-guidelines-safety-and-aa-groups)

## **Recording Zoom Meetings**

Be alert for AI recordings of the meeting. These violate our tradition of anonymity.

## **Managing Zoom Bombing**

It is important to have trained Co-hosts at each meeting, preferably more than one. They can react quickly to remove Zoom bombers while allowing the Secretary to focus on the meeting.

Some settings that can help discourage Zoom bombing:

- Require a passcode to enter.
- Enable a waiting room. Co-hosts can monitor for offensive names before admittance.
- Disable the ability of participants to rename themselves—this keeps people from hiding behind new aliases
- Disable participant screen sharing.

Such bombing events can be very upsetting. Experience shows us that it is best to follow up such an event by acknowledging that it happened and that the group is working to manage it. If the bomber has used racist, sexist, or abusive language, reassure the group that these are not the opinions of AA.

## Managing Other Disruptive Behavior

If someone interjects inappropriately or makes the rooms unsafe for any group of people by using offensive language:

1. Ask the disruptive person to stop.
2. If non-compliance continues: “You will be asked to leave if you’re not quiet.”
3. If the problem persists: Take a group conscience (vote) on whether the member should be asked to leave.
4. If the group votes to ask the member to leave and they refuse, eject them from the meeting.

## Managing Dangerous or Illegal Behavior

The Rockridge Fellowship has a 6-person Safety Committee that works to ensure the safety of our members. When an event occurs that cannot be solved at the meeting level reach out to the Safety Committee. The Safety Committee Guidelines are posted in the Library and on our website. Please encourage members to contact the committee if they have any concerns.

If someone threatens members at the Fellowship please eject them from the meeting and contact the Fellowship Coordinator and the Safe Rooms Committee Chair right away.

Fellowship Coordinator: [RRF@rockridgefellowship.org](mailto:RRF@rockridgefellowship.org)  
Safe Rooms Committee Chair: [safe@rockridgefellowship.org](mailto:safe@rockridgefellowship.org)

Sometimes the Steering Committee will suspend an individual from the Fellowship for a defined period of time, after which they can meet with the Steering Committee and be allowed to return. Every now and then one of these suspensions affects online groups—for example, when an individual has been preying on newcomers for money or sex. In these cases the suspension applies to online Rockridge meetings as well as in-person meetings. Such decisions are taken after careful consideration of AA Traditions.

## Business Meetings

There are two types of business meetings at Rockridge:

- The Rockridge Fellowship business meeting: This is where members of Rockridge learn about things happening in the larger AA world and vote on things that affect the Fellowship as a whole. Secretaries can bring up the concerns of their meeting. They also report back to their groups. This business meeting is held 7:00–8:30pm on the second Tuesday of the month. It is hybrid—the Zoom link is on the Rockridge website: [rockridgefellowship.org](http://rockridgefellowship.org).
- Your group’s business meeting: This is where your individual group will do its business. Some groups meet regularly and others choose to meet only when needed.

## When Your Term Is Over

Meeting service positions last 6 months. The month before you rotate out you will hold elections for Secretary, co-hosts, and other group trusted servants:

1. Second week of June/December: Announce elections.
2. Third week of June/December: Hold the election.  
Ask for nominations and volunteers. Don’t stop at the first volunteer! If more than two people make themselves available, have them enter a breakout room and hold a vote.
3. Term starts July 1/January 1.

If your group doesn't have a formal training for secretaries, walk the new secretary through the position's responsibilities. Share your contact information with your replacement and encourage them to register and attend the orientation.

## Resources & Contacts

The Rockridge website is [rockridgefellowship.org](http://rockridgefellowship.org). You can find the Rockridge meeting guide, business meeting and financial reports, secretary information, and contact lists for trusted servants.

Rockridge Fellowship has a Steering Committee to handle the complex process of keeping our physical and virtual doors open—they can help you! A contact list for all Rockridge Fellowship coordinators is in on the website. Here are the people you are likely to need to get in touch with:

**Online Meeting Coordinator:** Contact for issues about Zoom registration, best practices, etc.  
[online@rockridgefellowship.org](mailto:online@rockridgefellowship.org)

**Fellowship Coordinator:** Contact for any issues regarding Rockridge business & safety, or if you don't know who best to ask. Also available if you can't get ahold of other Steering Committee members. [RRF@rockridgefellowship.com](mailto:RRF@rockridgefellowship.com)

**Safe Rooms Committee Chair:** Contact for any safety issues. [safe@rockridgefellowship.com](mailto:safe@rockridgefellowship.com)

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